

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEON VALLEY,
TEXAS, OCTOBER 8, 2008**

The City Council of the City of Leon Valley, Texas, met on the 8th day of October 2008 at the Leon Valley Conference Center, at 6421 Evers Road, Leon Valley, Texas, for the purpose of the following business, to-wit:

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING - 7:00 P.M.

Call to order.

Mayor Riley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and introduced Councilmembers present: Manea, Baldrige, Dean, and Nelson. Mayor Riley announced that Councilmember Reyna was sorry to miss the meeting but his absence was excused.

City Manager Lambert, City Secretary Feutz, Fire Chief Irwin, Police Chief Wallace, City Accountant Wallace, Public Works Director Vick, Community Development Director Flores, Economic Development Director Ryan, and Library Director Trent were also present.

Mayor Riley introduced the members of the Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to the audience and thanked members of the SDAT for their work over the past three days. She briefly explained how the City came to receive the SDAT grant which brought the diverse team of professionals from the American Institute of Architects to Leon Valley for the SDAT.

One of the SDAT team members, Robert Yakas, was wished a "Happy Birthday" and a cake was presented to him

Mayor Riley then turned the meeting over to Erin Simmons, Director for Design Assistance from the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, D.C. and SDAT Project Manager and architect James Sherrell from Polis Studio in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Presentation by American Institute of Architects' Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) on preliminary recommendations for a sustainable plan design for:

Ms. Simmons introduced the rest of the SDAT, including Mr. Sherrell, Jeremy Alvarez, architect from Stantec of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Todd Fagen, architect from Land Strategies, Inc, in Chicago, Illinois, Robert Yakas, architect from Robert Yakas Design in Hillsboro, Oregon, and David Marquardt, a landscape architect from Vierbicher Associates in Madison, Wisconsin.

Ms. Simmons reviewed the purpose of a SDAT and the goals and areas of study the SDAT looked at in the SDAT. She explained that all planning decisions must be assessed based on the three elements of sustainability: environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic development/growth. SDAT Project Manager, James Sherrell explained the regional issues considered by the team during the assessment process: education, economic stability, sustainability, generational diversity, city identity, town center, Bandera Road, and mobility.

Economic Sustainability - Jeremy Alvarez

Mr. Alvarez reviewed the current strengths of the community which included great local services and being a bedroom community of San Antonio. He stated that the access and mobility of Leon Valley were both strengths and weaknesses and emphasized that much more could be done with transit, particularly encouraging bus ridership and more bus shelters for

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riders. He reminded everyone that it takes local tax revenue to keep providing great public services and the major sources of that revenue was local sales tax and ad valorem property taxes. Mr Alvarez pointed out the blank commercial property sign faces and older strip centers were not good for enticing new businesses to locate in Leon Valley and that the declining retail locations were part of the reason sales tax was declining. His analysis of Bandera Road declining included the overall appearance of Bandera Road being disjointed, property configurations were disconnected, sites were too small, and the access was poor with large drainage ditches along the side of the road. Critical steps he recommended were to rethink the circulation for Bandera Road and to create an alternative design vision by the City doing their own study. He recommended involving other local agencies - medical center, universities, AACOG, VIA in the process and for the City to get to know every business in Leon Valley and provide encouragement to business owners, thus managing the business corridor.

Land Use - David Marquardt

Mr. Marquardt reviewed existing land use conditions of retail, commercial and mostly single family dwellings. His recommendations for land use along Bandera Road included the use of overlay districts that would lend flexibility, support mixed use development, and insure that the properties are not redeveloped in the same way they are set up now. He stated that a good market assessment was necessary to bring in the right kind of businesses to the area. He suggested that the City reserve some previously zoned retail land for other uses - housing, office spaces, civic uses, recreational facilities and open spaces. He recommended that nodes of development be redeveloped such as a "24-hour zone" at Loop 410 and Bandera with other nodes having a higher density being considered at intersections with Rue Francois, El Verde, Huebner, Wurzbach, Seneca, and Poss Roads. At those nodes, Mr. Marquardt proposed the nodes to be functional linkages for mass transit and traffic with streetscapes, wide sidewalks and landscaping and bringing the building fronts closer to the street. He recommended that the development create "the Place" with new zoning to increase activity at "the Place" and surrounding business areas. He suggested bio-swales to treat stormwater as a positive addition. He also proposed that the City evaluate their existing open space systems and capitalize on those open spaces to have Leon Valley be recognized as a "Green City". He suggested developing a street tree planting program - "City of 1000 trees" and encouraged the City to continue to implement trail linkages and connections to urban and natural sections of the City.

Transportation - Todd Fagen

Mr. Fagen encouraged Leon Valley to capitalize on its geographical position and stated that land use and transportation go hand-in-hand. He stated that the noise and pollution of an overhead tollways would not be good for the community and encouraged Leon Valley to work with TxDOT to maintain Bandera Road as a boulevard as changes that would increase traffic on Bandera Road will just accelerate growth to the North and West of Leon Valley. He encouraged the City to continue to work on its connectivity with shuttles for enhanced community mobility, walkable community trails/paths to schools and parks, bike trails along roadways, and the creation of community ambassadors for green connections. Mr. Fagen proposed a program where students who walk or bike to school are rewarded. Mr. Fagen told how communities across the United States are taking out highways that divide communities at great expense. He recommended that in managing Bandera Road, the City should work towards having Bus Rapid Transit incorporated on Bandera Road, that the city add green components and soften current underpasses near Loop 410 and that other uses for that corridor be explored. Mr. Fagen stated that parking lots on Bandera Road and in most zoning is overbuilt and recommended that shared parking, reconfiguring the amount of parking actually needed by a site, land banking,

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solar parking, and using permeable materials in parking lots be considered as options to soften the look of business centers along Bandera Road.

City Center/City Identity - Bob Yakas

Mr. Yakas presented information on how meeting with community groups the team looked at a City center which would be close to the actual center of the city, connect to the Community/Conference Center areas of the City, and have pedestrian connections to local and regional trails and open space networks. He displayed the area chosen as the intersection of Poss at Bandera Roads and provided a sample logo that could be used for the Town Center. He explained that a town center would help give the City identity but needed to be developed according the principals of Transit Oriented Development and should be the "heart" of a diverse mixed use center with retail, entertainment, residential, government offices, and commercial offices. He described the possible center has having open spaces and distinctive architecture with an 18-hour activity window. He stated that the center must be served by transit and be accessible by all modes of travel. He provided examples of street treatments, and corridor design that could be used in developing such a city center. Mr. Yakas emphasized that the City would have to adopt the idea and designate the town center in all of its documents and set goals to achieve the highest LEED certification for new development in the town center. Mr. Yakas also encouraged making Leon Valley "readable" by using: a street tree program, sustainable corridor ideas, street lighting demonstration project, street furniture - entry monuments, use of banners, flags and flower pots, develop a unique sign program, and requiring public space in new developments on or near Bandera Road.

Kick-Off Projects - James Sherrell

In closing, the team recommended five kick-off projects to begin the process of moving forward: 1) create a Bandera Road Vision Document, 2) Poss Road reconstruction, 3) LEED construction initiative, 4) Leon Valley Town Center, and 5) Street tree planting program. Mr. Sherrell explained what happens next with the delivery of their report in 2-3 months, conference calls within the first year after the SDAT, and at one year - a return visit for an on-site assessment of the City's progress. The team thanked all the participants for their assistance in helping to make the SDAT's visit successful.

Citizens to be heard to allow public input on the SDAT project and findings.

The SDAT invited the public to come forward to speak individually with the team, as the hour was getting late in the evening.

Closing Comments by Mayor and Council.

Mayor Riley thanked each of the SDAT members and presented each with a tray and certificates of appreciation. Mayor Riley thanked everyone for coming and for everyone's participation in the program.

Adjourn

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Riley announced the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. No votes or formal actions were taken by the City Council at this meeting.

Mayor Chris Riley

ATTEST:

Marie Feutz, City Secretary

Approved by City Council's unanimous vote at the Regular City Council meeting of October 21, 2008